

No.B.12012/10/2020 - FST
GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT

NOTIFICATION

Dated Aizawl, the 7th August, 2023

In exercise of the powers conferred by sections 12, 17 (B) and 28 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and in the interest of public service, the Governor of Mizoram is pleased to notify the Guidelines for Grant of Permission for Scientific Research in Protected Areas and Other Forests outside Protected Areas in the State of Mizoram, which shall come into force with effect from date of publication in the official Gazette and shall remain in operation till such time the State Government may consider deem fit and proper, as follows:

**GUIDELINES FOR GRANT OF PERMISSION FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN PROTECTED
AND OTHER FOREST AREAS IN THE STATE OF MIZORAM**

Scientific Research in basic ecology, conservation biology and the social sciences (in so far as they seek to understand the socio-economic dynamics of the impact of people and forests on each other) is vital for better understanding of the current status of various species and their habitats, the structure and functions of ecosystems, the ecology of species, and their interaction with human society. Knowledge generated from scientific research is essential for wildlife and forest managers to identify the appropriate conservation and field management strategies. Such knowledge is also necessary for identifying sustainable and eco-friendly livelihood options for people living in and around forests which can reduce human footprint in wildlife habitats.

The case for such scientific knowledge is particularly strong in Mizoram as it is one of the most biological diverse states of India and a globally important biodiversity hotspot. Yet there is very little information available on the state's rich wildlife heritage. Even complete species inventories are not available for most areas of the state let alone more detailed studies of ecological conservation requirements of individual species.

As per guidelines of the National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) research projects to identify/measure biological diversity, monitor the status of indicator/flagship/threatened species of flora and fauna, study their breeding biology, and the socio-economic aspects of conservation should be given priority even within Protected Areas. Such research is needed for identifying high diversity value areas, for developing ecosystem and landscape-level management strategies, and to overcome specific management problems in Protected Areas.

Recognizing the significance of such research, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has several provisions to encourage scientific research in Protected Areas and other Wildlife Habitats. Sections 12, 17 and 28 (grant of permit) of the Act give authority to the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) to grant permission for research in Protected Areas (Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks) under his/her jurisdiction.

The rest of this document lays down the guidelines for encouraging and authorizing research in Protected Areas and other Wildlife Habitats in Mizoram. It includes the following sections:

- A) Terms and Definitions
- B) Governing Principles for research permits
- C) Procedure for applying for research permit
- D) Research regulations

Annexure A: Members of the State Research Advisory Committee

Annexure B: Research Permit Application Form

Annexure C: Format of research permit application

Prospective researchers should read sections A-D and apply in the format provided in Annexures B and C.

A) TERMS & DEFINITIONS-

1. **Protected Areas (PA's):** Legally notified areas for protection of wildlife under WPA-1972, including National Parks, Tiger Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves.
2. **Wildlife Habitats:** Any area under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environment and Forests (including Protected Areas) and the other areas with free-living wild species of plants or animals, or species listed under the different Schedules of WPA-1972.
3. **Forests:** Notified forests such as Riverine Reserve Forests, Roadside Reserve Forests, District Council Protected Reserve Forests, Compensatory Afforestation Areas under various provisions of the Mizoram Forests Act, 1955.
4. **Chief Wildlife Warden:** As per WPA-1972, the principal authority responsible for the administration of Wildlife Habitats and the protection of wildlife in the State.
5. **Wildlife Managers:** Officials of the Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Mizoram, who are the designated (local area) authorities for management of specific Wildlife Habitats. They will also be the designated authorities for regulation of research activities within Wildlife habitats.
6. **Research Institutions:** Organizations involved in basic or applied research in ecology, conservation biology and conservation, registered with or owned or recognized by the Government of India or State Governments in the country, including universities, colleges, scientific organizations and NGOs.
7. **Researcher:** Professional scientists (ecologists, conservation biologists and social scientists), PhD scholars, students at the Bachelors and Masters level, and any other technically skilled personnel including wildlife enthusiasts and conservationists, who may or may not be affiliated with Research Institutions.
8. **Research Team:** Includes the Researcher in whose name the permit shall be issued (Principal Investigator), his/her collaborators, students, technical staff, local guides and field assistants.
9. **Biological Material or Biomaterial:** Any part or whole specimen of an organism including living or dead tissue or any material using which genetic and other bio molecular assays may be carried out, or chemical or other extracts from such material.

10. Research Methods:

a. Field ID

- Larger mammals (larger than a cat) and almost all birds which can be identified by sight or on a camera image (camera trap).
- Amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates (e.g. moths and butterflies) which require closer examination in hand for species identification are caught using standard equipment and released at the same place after identification.

b. Trapping and release (traps, cages, mist-nets etc.)

- Smaller mammals which are usually nocturnal (e.g. rodents) which are rarely encountered and difficult to identify on sight.
- Identification tags and collars: for identification of individual animals for repeated observations for studies of range sizes, migration, behavior, population dynamics etc., all animals including mammals and birds.
- Morphometric data deriving traits, ages etc.

Both these tasks will require trained personnel for avoiding mortality.

c. Biological material – Non-lethal tissue samples

- Collection of leaf, flower samples for plant identification.
- Samples for genetic or other biomolecular research without killing the organism. These include scat, hair, skin, tail, or ear clippings of mammals; feathers, blood samples and cheek swabs of birds; toe or tail clips of herpesto-fauna; middle legs of arthropods; leaves or stalk of plants etc. This may be collected actively (from living organisms) or passively (e.g. scats, historical trophies, fallen leaves).
- Other ecosystem components including soil, water, rocks, etc. which may include residues of animals and plants, and micro-organisms.

d. Biological material – whole specimens

- Whole specimens of species for museums, educational purposes, etc.
- Morphometric measurements of species.
- Species identification of invertebrates which require examination under a microscope; most of such species are not in any Schedule of WPA-1972.
- Any other research purpose.

e. Any other method

- Interviews with people.
- Examination of Government records, etc.

11. Duration of Research:

Based on the duration of study, wildlife research may be categorized as follows:

- i. Short-term research: Surveys or short studies involving field work up to 1 year.
- ii. Medium-term research: Field work of 1-4 years.
- iii. Long-term research: Field work exceeding 4 years.

B) GOVERNING PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH PERMITS-

1. All research permits shall be issued by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF). The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests may be assisted and advised by the State Research Advisory Committee in the matter of issuing research permits. The committee shall consist of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF); Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Admn.); Chief Conservator of Forests (Admn.); Chief Wildlife Warden; Member Secretary of Mizoram Biodiversity Board; Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Field Director (Dampa Tiger Reserve); Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Aizawl, Head of Department, Department of Zoology; Head of Department, Department of Botany; Head of Department, Department of Forestry, MZU; Research Assistant, EF&CC Dept. (Annexure A)
2. The State Research Advisory Committee shall meet at least four times a year on dates fixed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) and consider proposals received at least 15 days prior to the date of meeting. The committee shall also suggest the areas of research relevant to management decisions with respect to Protected Areas of the State. The Committee may co-opt additional subject specialists into the committee, as needed, depending on the proposed research activities.
3. Research projects approved by the MoEF& CC, Government of India, and the Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Mizoram, will not be reviewed by the committee and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) will grant the necessary permit.
4. Research that involves trapping, collection of biological material or killing of any species listed in Schedule-I of WPA-1972 requires prior permission of the Additional Director General (Wildlife) and Director (Wildlife Preservation) MoEF& CC, Govt. of India. Such proposals should be submitted to the Chief Wildlife Warden with a copy to the Addl. Director General (Wildlife) MoEF&CC, Govt. of India.
5. Research permission shall be granted to foreigner or non-resident Indian Researchers and Research Institutions not registered in India only after the project has been pre-approved by MoEF&CC, NBA (Section 3 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002), Ministry of External Affairs, and Ministry of Home Affairs Protected Area Permit (PAP) will be required to enter Mizoram.
6. Permission for long term research to research requiring to collection of biological material shall be granted only to researchers affiliated to or sponsored by Research Institutions. However, research permits may be given to researchers who are not affiliated to nay Research Institutions if their work does not involve trapping, caging or collection of any biological material.
7. Wildlife Managers/DFOs should identify and encourage priority research, which may encourage researchers to provide inputs that enhance management effectiveness and knowledge of biodiversity values in their area.
8. Researchers or their team shall be permitted entry into the Protected Area/Wildlife habitats/Reserve Forests only if they are accompanied by forest guides/staff/eco-development committee members or others as the case maybe. A suitable amount maybe fixed by the Wildlife Managers/DFOs from time to time for such services.

9. Movement at night in PAs shall be allowed only if it is a part of the approved research project. A schedule for such movements shall be developed in consultation with the Wildlife Manager.
10. While research on charismatic animal species (mostly birds and mammals) is important, researchers should be particularly encouraged to take up studies of non-charismatic species (i.e. herpeto-fauna, fish, invertebrates, fungi, etc) which make up the bulk of biodiversity that Mizoram is globally famous for.
11. Unless specifically authorized in the research permit, collection of biological material by researchers is expressly prohibited.

C. PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR RESEARCH PERMIT-

1. The research permit application should consist of the completed application form (Annexure B and Research Permit Application Annexure RP1), and any of the other Research Permit Application Annexure (RP2 - RP5) as indicated.
2. RP1 should clearly mention the objectives, methodology, literature review, work plan, duration and expected outputs.
3. Researchers are encouraged to discuss their proposals with the respective Wildlife Manager before finalizing the same.
4. For permission to collect biological material, the application should :-
 - i. Justify the necessity of biological material for the research.
 - ii. Include a statement of the impact of collection on the conservation status of the taxon.
 - iii. Include a statement on how the biological material or its derivatives will be made available to other researchers in the future, when needed.
5. Any modifications to the proposal suggested by the State Research Advisory Committee from a conservation perspective shall have to be incorporated into the proposal by the Researcher before the grant of permission.
6. Researchers should submit the application to the office of the Chief Wildlife Warden at the following addresses :
 - a. Email : pccfaizawlmizoram@gmail.com
 - b. Postal Address :
Office of the PCCF (HoFF)
Government of Mizoram
Tuikhuahtlang
Aizawl, 796001, Mizoram
7. Permits may be downloaded from <https://forest.mizoram.gov.in/>

D. RESEARCH REGULATIONS-

1. Role of the Wildlife Managers/DFOs:

- a. The Wildlife Managers/DFOs shall be the principal local authority for implementing the regulations of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, governing research activities.
- b. Wildlife Managers/DFOs may impose reasonable regulations and area specific conditions on the researchers.
- c. The Researcher should provide the Wildlife Managers/DFO a list of all the members of the research team prior to the start of field work.
- d. Wildlife Managers/DFOs shall issue photo identity cards to the research team during the period of study.
- e. The Researcher should discuss issues of safety, accessibility and proposed research activities with the Wildlife Manager/DFO before the start of research.
- f. Movement of researchers or their assistants in the PA shall be recorded in a log book to be maintained by him/her which should be submitted to the park management every month.
- g. The Wildlife Manager/DFO has the authority to temporarily suspend any or all research activities for reasons of safety, violations of regulations and guidelines and the need of conservation and wildlife management with information to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF).

2. Research Fees:

An annual fee will be charged for all research work by the Government of Mizoram. All fees shall be deposited in the form of a Demand Draft in favour of "The PCCF, Govt. of Mizoram" payable at Aizawl, Fee for the first year should accompany the research application form. Researchers of multi-year projects should pay this amount at the beginning of every subsequent year to retain the validity of the permit.

Sl.No.	Researcher	Amount (annual)
1	Students (M.Sc/B.Sc) and non-professional	Rs 1000/-
2	Ph.D scholars	Rs 2500/-
3	Professional Scientists	Rs 5000/-
4	Foreigners, after due approval of the Ministry of Home/GOI/External Affair/MoEF& CC	USD 500

- a. A research team will be exempted from personnel and vehicle entry fees charged by Wildlife Managers/DFOs.
- b. Researchers from the institutions directly affiliated to the Department of Environment, and Forests & Climate Change, Government of Mizoram, and MoEF& CC, Govt. of India, will be exempted from payment of research fees.

3. Reports, Documentation and Biological Material:

- a. Copies of all photographs taken during the course of the research project must be made available to the Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Govt. of Mizoram when needed for purposes of documentation, conservation, publicity and education. The same will be acknowledged on use.
- b. An inventory of the collected biological materials must be deposited with the Wildlife Manager/DFO, who shall maintain a register/file for this purpose. Any researcher/Scientist intending to collect biological material shall be asked to check this register prior to starting the work to ascertain if the material already collected is useful to them. This will avoid unnecessary collection of biological material.
- c. Final Project report(s) shall be submitted as follows :
 - i. Hard copies : one each to the Wildlife Manager/DFO and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF).
 - ii. Soft copies : to the Wildlife Manager/DFO and Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (HOD/HoFF).
 - iii. Schedule of submission of final project report on the field work
 - Short term project (up to 1 year) : within 3 months of completion.
 - Medium term projects (1-4 years) : within 6 months of completion.
 - Long term projects : within 1 year of completion.
 - Multi-year projects must submit an annual status report to continue the Research.
- d. Research papers can take several years from the end of field work to publication. The same may be submitted to the Wildlife Manager/DFO and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) as and when they are published.
- e. The Researcher shall also submit the research funding, thesis, reports, data, research papers, etc. to the Wildlife Institute of India as a national repository for easy access.
- f. At the end of the study, all biological materials must be deposited in an institutional repository and made available to other researchers who wish to use them.

4. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) as Appellate Authority:

- a. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) at his/her discretion may suspend or revoke the permission issued for the research project, or regulate its field component in time and space, in response to issues of safety, protection, conservation and management of Protected Areas.
- b. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) may at his/her discretion extend the validity of the research permit on a written request from the Principal Investigator on such terms and conditions as are deemed appropriate.

- c. In case of violation of any of the conditions mentioned herein, including payment of annual research fees, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) shall have the authority to revoke the permission previously granted, without prejudice to other legal proceedings.
- d. The Researcher shall be held liable for any damage or loss caused due to an act of negligence of the research team, the compensation for which will be assessed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOD/HoFF) and he/she will also be liable for action as per applicable law.

Sd/- R.K.SINGH.
Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram,
Environment, Forest & Climate Change Department.

Memo B.12012/10/2020-FST

Dated Aizawl, the 7th August, 2023

Copy to:-

1. Secretary to Governor, Mizoram.
2. P.S. to the Chief Minister, Mizoram. Aizawl.
3. All Ministers / Ministers of State / Speaker / Deputy Speaker, Mizoram.
4. O.S.D. to the Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram.
5. All Administrative Departments/ Heads of Departments, Government of Mizoram.
6. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Mizoram.
7. All Conservators of Forests, Mizoram.
8. All Divisional Forest Officers, Mizoram.
9. Controller, Printing & Stationery with a request to publish in the official Gazette (6 spare copies).
10. Web Manager, Environment, Forests & Climate Change Department for uploading in the Department website.
11. Guard File.


07/08/2023

(H.C.ZONUNTHARA)

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